a comprehensive proposal for amendment in the existing lists of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes which can be done only through an Act of Parliament in view of Articles 341(2) and 342(2) of the Constitution.

Decline in the profits of SAIL

420. SHRI PARVATHANENI UPENDRA: Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to refer to answer to Unstarred Question 1486 given in the Rajya Sabha on the 7th August, 1987 and state:

(a) whether accounts of the SAIL for the year 1986-87 have been finalised; if so, whether its profits during the 1986-87 have come down substantially;

(b) if so, what are the reasons therefor; and

(c) what steps have been taken by Government to improve viability of the Steel plants?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF STEEL IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA): (a) Yes, Sir. SAIL earned a profit of Rs. 52.31 crores during the financial year 1986-87 as compared to Rs. 159 crores during 1985-86.

(b) The reduction in the profits during 1986-87 was mainly due to:—

(i) Increase in the prices of inputs particularly of coal, power, ferro-alloys and Railway freight.

(ii) Non-availability of adequate power.

(c) SAIL is making efforts to improve its profitability, *inter-alia*, by way of the following measures:—

(i) Increase total production and improve productivity;

(ii) Improve techno-economic parameters;

(iii) Reduce inventories and working capital;

(iv) Systematic improvement in maintenance of plant and equipment for better availability;

(v) Ensure adequate inputs and of the right quality;

(vi) Modernisation of the projects alongwith technological upgradation; and

(vii) Optimisation of captive power generation and energy conservation.

Indo-US Sub-Commission on Agriculture

421. SHRI PARVATHANENI UPENDRA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Indo-US Sub-Commission on Agriculture has also decided upon co-operation in arid zone agriculture and dryland farming, besides water management and evaluation of ground water resources; and

(b) if so, the details of the agreement and the follow-up action taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND COOPERATION IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHYAM LAL YADAV): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) A statement giving details of the Joint Communique signed at the end of 5th Meeting of Indo-US Sub-Commission on Agriculture on 11th December, 1987 is enclosed. (*See* below). Concerned Departments/Organisations have been advised to

develop specific projects in the areas identified for cooperation with the United States.

Statement

Indo-US Sub-Commission on Agriculture—Joint Communique of Fifth Meeting

The Fifth Meeting of the Indo-US Sub-Commission on Agriculture was held in New Delhi from 7 to 11 December, 1987 in the Ministry of Agriculture, Government of India. The Session was hosted by the Indian Chairman of the Sub-Commission, Shri C Srinivasa Sastry, Secretary to the Government of India, Ministry of Agriculture, Department of Agriculture and Cooperation. The U.S. delegation was headed by the U.S. Chairman of the Sub-Commission, Dr. Orville G. Bentley, Assistant Secretary, US Department of Agriculture, Washington D.C

2. The two delegations restated the commitment of both countries to democratic values and to the importance of the Sub-Commission as the key official forum for development and enhancement of bilateral agricultural programmes between India and the U.S. They further re-affirmed their earnest desire to strengthen and expand areas of cooperation in the Sub-Commission for mutual benefit.

3. The two delegations recalled 'New Initiatives in Indo-US Relations' identified by Prime Minister Shri Rajiv Gandhi and President Ronald Reagan during the visit of the former to the United States in October, 1987. Both leaders had agreed that the two countries will undertake cooperative research programmes and projects for enhancement of productivity in arid zone agriculture, water management, and evaluation of ground water resources.

4. In keeping with these goals, the Sub-Commission recognised the need to identify new projects for implementation to increase bilateral cooperation. It was agreed that distinct and identifiable projects in arid zone agriculture, water management, and evaluation of ground water resources may be developed as a symbol of Indo-US cooperation in agriculture.

5. The two delegations noted with satisfaction the establishment of US-India Fund in February, 1987. This would assist the implementation of collaborative efforts in agriculture on a sustained basis.

6. The Co-Chairs provided guidance to the 'Working Groups' by suggesting further areas appropriate for Indo-US collaboration. These priority areas included drought proofing agro-meteorology, bio - technology, plant genetic resources, oilseeds research, horticulture and aquaculture.

7. The four Working Groups, operating under the authority of the Sub-Commission, held meetings to consider the proposals suggested by each side and to determine priorities in research and education, extension and training, management of natural resources and inputs and allied technology.

8. The Working Group on Research and Education emphasised the need to strengthen collaborative research in the areas of dryland agriculture and water resources management. These topic represent current agricultural priorities both in the U.S. and India and have been agreed to for cooperative research. The

Working Group also endorsed collaboration in the following areas: agricultural education, animal sciences, aquaculture, ground water exploration and management, horticulture, integrated pest management, oilseed utilisation, plant genetic resources, and plastics in agriculture.

9. The Working Group on Extension and Training re-affirmed the importance of cooperation between India and U.S. in the development of collaborative training programmes in extension management and agricultural sciences. The building of collegial relationships between scientists and between institutions in the two countries was also re-affirmed. The group placed high priority on training in dryland agriculture, water management, communications, and fish farming.

10. The Working Group on Natural Resources Management identified water management, evaluation of ground water resources and conservation farming as thrust areas. These areas included a arid zone farming, catchment treatment, grassland areas management and development, land reclamation, development of poultry farming, and aquaculture, improvement of technology and management skills through pilot proejcts, training programmes, workshops, seminars, exchange of experts, and exchange of literature was set forth to provide the basis for specific project formulation. Field oriented model watershed projects were proposed as prime vehicles to achieve the mutual objectives.

11. The Working Group on Inputs and Allied Technology held wide-ranging discussions on the situation and outlook for agricultural inputs. The Working Group identified agro-economic studies, technical study visits, information exchanges and data base management and development as areas of priority.

12. The reports and recommendations of the Working Groups are accepted and endorsed by the Sub-Commission.

13. The major achievements of the fifth meeting of the Sub-Commission were the identification of further areas of cooperation between the two countries and increased confidence of the two sides to undertake definitive agricultural projects.

14. The Sub-Commission agreed to convene the Sixth Meeting in Washington, D.C. at a mutually convenient time in 1989.

Prospects of Rabi Crop

422. SHRI PARVATHANENI UPENDRA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether prospects for the Rabi crop are not good due to poor winter rains and lowering of the water level in the major Rabi crop growing areas; and

(b) if so, the steps taken by Government to meet the situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND COOPERATION IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHYAM LAL YADAV): (a) It is too early to make an assessment of rabi crop production prospects at this stage. However, the recent rains have improved the condition of the standing rabi crops.

(b) Does not arise.